

Response to Comments Made By
Sacramento River Preservation Trust
Letter dated November 27, 1992

Comment #1

The five conventional pumps currently in operation with a total capacity of 125 cubic feet per second were installed beginning in 1989 when three were put into operation. In 1990, an additional two pumps were added. The pumps were installed to permit water delivery during gates-up operation of RBDD. The design for the screens at the intake are currently underway. Installation must await completion of the PPP. Currently, there is no monitoring of the effects of the pumps. However, during operation, gates on the right side of the dam are closed to direct river flows and downstream migrating fish will be directed away from the pumps.

Comment #2

The copy of the proposed fish study has been sent to you as requested. However, as noted on the study, this is still a proposal. This or any other study will be made available at a later date only after it is finalized. Therefore, a copy will not be included as an attachment to the final Environmental Assessment (EA) as suggested.

Comment #3

The discussion concerning alternatives considered but eliminated, consisted of six additional proposals. The one proposal consisted of only a single helical pump. The remaining four proposals consisted of one helical pump and one archimedes screw pump, one helical and two archimedes screw pumps and so on; the last proposed combination consisting of one helical and six archimedes screw pumps. These alternatives included the existing pumps (125 cfs) to be operated in conjunction with the various combinations of helical and archimedes screw pumps.

The pumping capacity of each progressively greater number of archimedes screw pumps were then each capable of allowing a greater number of days during which RBDD can be operated with the gates up. The biological criteria alluded to in the DEA refers to the peak migration period of the winter-run passage that would occur during the year. When evaluated together with the number of days of gates-up operation, it was found that the number of additional fish that would benefit did increase. However, the PPP is not intended to be an optimal solution to the fish passage problem. Because the PPP is designed in part to resolve the uncertainty regarding this application of archimedes and helical pumps, additional investment in these pumps was determined to be inappropriate for the pilot study. Therefore, only the PPP alternative was selected for discussion and review in the DEA along with the no action alternative.

Comment #4

The discussion which appeared in the draft EA concerning replacement of elderberry shrubs was in reference to a past mitigation measure which was unsuccessful. It is for the purposes of discussion in this case that,

elderberry shrubs do not currently exist on the proposed site. However, Reclamation will attempt to correct this once construction activity ceases. Efforts will be made once again, to replace the shrubs from the previous, unrelated project. Depending on the final outcome of design and construction decisions and activities, we cannot at this time, commit to an exact location where replanting will take place or the date on which the shrubs will be in place. If so desired, Reclamation will keep you informed as these decisions are made and attempts at replanting take place.

Comment #5

Reference was made to a statement which appears at the top of page 30, first paragraph. "There would be no significant difference in water delivery" was made in reference to the no action alternative in comparison to operations currently in practice at RBDD. It was not made in reference to or in comparison with the preferred alternative. For purposes of clarification, this statement has been re-worded for the FEA to read, "Water delivery will remain unchanged from current operations at RBDD".

Comment #6

Comment regarding stated purpose of the PPP lacking reference to other potential research benefits is valid. Wording has been changed to reflect the concern raised. The only impact of the PPP is to provide an alternate means of diversion. This would allow existing CVP delivery to be maintained while extending gate-up operation of RBDD. No new development is proposed. The benefits to be accrued include additional biological and environmental information, as well as engineering and technical data that can be realized with the its installation and operation. Reference was made in the DEA to such benefits in the Summary of the document. Discussions were also included regarding biological studies and other data collection proposals throughout the DEA. The draft fish study which you requested is one such proposal.

Comment #7

The discrepancy in the date of the DEA and the cover letter used for distribution was noted. Reclamation would like to assure you that every possible means were used to expedite the distribution of the DEA for public comment. Every attempt was made to accomodate additional comments and final changes from participating agencies to arrive at as good a document as possible before public review.

Additionally, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, a public comment period is not required for an EA. Due to the very ambitious schedule that Reclamation and the participating agencies are trying to adhere to, the public comment period of 3 weeks was judged to be more than adequate. At no time however, was elimination of a comment period considered. Reclamation and the other participating agencies made the decision earlier that public review and comment would be a necessary and integral part of the project.

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